

Appl. No. 10/808,626
Reply to OA of 3/8/06

REMARKS

Summary of the Amendment

Upon entry of the present Amendment, Claims 1-12 will have been canceled, Claims 22-25 will have been amended, and Claim 26 will have been added. Accordingly, Claims 22-26 remain pending in the present application. By the present Amendment and Remarks, Applicant submits that the rejections have been overcome, and respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action and allowance of the present application.

Summary of the Office Action

In the subject Office Action, the Examiner objected to Claims 1, 22, 23 and 25 and rejected claims 1-12 and 22-25. Specifically, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4 and 7-10 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hiroshima et al (JP 2001-5253). Furthermore, the Examiner rejected claims 5, 6, 11, 12, and 22-25 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hiroshima in view of Nakajima et al (US 5,966,555).

Objection to Claims

The Examiner objected to Claims 1, 22, 23 and 25 for informalities.

With respect to Claim 1, Applicant has canceled this claim. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that this objection is now moot with respect to Claim 1.

The Examiner made various objections to Claims 22-25. Particularly, the Examiner stated that the recitations of "said sheet feeding device" and "the sheet feeding device" are unclear as to which of the multiple sheet supplying devices is being referred to. Applicant has amended Claims 22-25 to clarify which of the sheet supplying device is being referred to.

Applicant has amended the claims to address the informalities. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objection to the claims.

Traversal of Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of Claims 1-4 and 7-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 2001-5253 to Hiroshima et al. (hereinafter "HIROSHIMA").

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Applicant has canceled Claims 1-4 and 7-10. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the rejection is now moot and should be withdrawn.

Traversal of Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of Claims 5, 6, 11, 12, and 22-25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over HIROSHIMA in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,966,555 to Nakajima et al. (hereinafter "NAKAJIMA").

Firstly, Applicant has canceled Claims 5, 6, 11, and 12. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the rejection is now moot with respect to these claims.

With respect to Claims 22-25, the Examiner submits that HIROSHIMA "teaches all that is claimed except the use of a determining unit for determining a position of the sheet supplying device ... The patent to Nakajima et al teaches ... a determining unit determining the position of the sheet supplying devices..."

Applicant's independent Claim 22 as amended recites, *inter alia*, a control unit determining a connection position of each sheet supplying device and deciding whether to inquire of each sheet supplying device a sheet interval according to the connection position.

Applicant respectfully submits that HIROSHIMA in view of NAKAJIMA do not teach the aforementioned feature. First, HIROSHIMA only discloses a color image forming apparatus provided with one cassette (14). Second, NAKAJIMA does not disclose the aforementioned feature. Rather, NAKAJIMA discloses detecting the number of sheets remaining in a cassette, comparing the detected number of sheets with that necessary to perform a print job, and setting the sheet feeding interval longer when the detected number is less than the number need to perform the print job, to allow an operator sufficient time to re-supply the cassette.

Since HIROSHIMA in view of NAKAJIMA fail to disclose the above-noted features of the present invention, Applicant submits that the references fail to disclose each and every feature of the present invention as recited in Claim 22.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that the Examiner has failed to provide an adequate evidentiary basis to support a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and that the rejection of Claim 22 is improper and should be withdrawn.

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Applicant further submits that dependent Claims 23-25 and new Claim 26 are allowable at least for the reason that these claims depend from allowable independent Claim 22 and because these claims recite additional features that further define the present invention.

Application is Allowable

Applicant respectfully submits that each and every pending claim on the present invention meets the requirements for patentability and respectfully requests the Examiner to indicate allowance of such claims.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that none of the references of record anticipate or render obvious the Applicant's invention as recited in Claims 22-26. The applied reference of record has been discussed and distinguished, while the significant claimed features of the present invention have been pointed out.

Further, any amendments to the claims which have been made in this response and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

If any additional fee is required, please charge Deposit Account No. 502456.

Respectfully submitted,



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